

CUARTETO MACHIN VOLUME I 1930-1932



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HQ CD 24

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Antonio Machin vocal/maracas/claves, Remberto Lara trumpet/? claves -1, Yayito Maldonado 1st guitar, Daniel Sánchez vocal/2nd guitar (see text).

BVE 62791-1 Adela 14 July 1930
BVE 62792-1 Suavecito
BVE 62793-1 A Baracoa Me Voy -1

Tres replaces one guitar; bongo drum added on at least the next track. Pedro Dávila added -2.

BVE 63644-1 Pobre Corazón 11 September 1930
BVE 63642-2 Dámelo -2 12 September 1930
BVE 63373-1 Se Va El Dulcerito 6 October 1930
BVE 63374-1 Quisiera Morirme -2
BVE 63392-1 La Rosa Oriental 15 October 1930

Antonio Machin vocal/maracas/claves, Mario Bauzá trumpet, Alejandro Rodríguez tres, Daniel Sánchez vocal/guitar, Mario vocal.

BRC 70287-1 Oprobio 15 October 1931
BRC 70915-1 El Huerfanito 29 October 1931
BRC 70916-1 Ilusión China
BRC 70918-1 Ojeras
BRC 70919-1 Las Flores De Mi Jardín

Antonio Machin vocal/maracas/claves, Plácido Acevedo (trumpet), Cándido Vincenty (tres), Daniel Sánchez vocal/guitar, Mario vocal on some but replaced by Pedro Dávila (Davilita) -2.

BS 73520-1 Buey Viejo 16 September 1932
BVE 73568-1 Sigue Tu Senda 23 September 1932
BVE 73569-1 Triguénita
BVE 73571-1 Lamento Cubano
BVE 73572-1 Esperanzas Muertas
BS 73578-1 Junto A Un Cañaveral -2 26 September 1932
BS 73579-1 Muñequita -2

All titles recorded in New York.

1. Adela (Figarola): 2. Suavecito (Piñeiro): 3. A Baracoa Me Voy (Machin): 4. Pobre Corazón (Ruiz): 5. Dámelo (Piñeiro): 6. Se Va El Dulcerito (Ruiz): 7. Quisiera Morirme (Ruiz): 8. La Rosa Oriental (Espigul): 9. Oprobio (Hernández): 10. El Huerfanito (Gutiérrez): 11. Ilusión China (Brito): 12. Ojeras (Gutiérrez): 13. Las Flores De Mi Jardín (Fabelo): 14. Buey Viejo (Piñeiro): 15. Sigue Tu Senda (Gómez): 16. Triguénita (Brito): 17. Lamento Cubano (Grenet): 18. Esperanzas Muertas (Machin): 19. Junto A Un Cañaveral (Ruiz): 20. Muñequita (Rodríguez)

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Curateto Machin, New York, 1933.
L-R: Plácido Acevedo, Daniel
Sánchez, Antonio Machin,
Cándido Vincenty.

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Many Cubans might not have heard about Antonio Machín, although for most of his life he was the ambassador of Cuban rhythms in Spain. Born in 1904 in Sagua La Grande, a town in the center of Cuba, he had a Spanish father and a black Cuban mother. His family was very poor and large – he had fifteen brothers and sisters – but having inherited his father's tenacity, he went to Havana, started singing and soon was recruited by Don Aspiazu (HARLEQUIN HQ CD 10) for his orchestra. He was the first black artist performing at the Casino Nacional de Cuba. He spent several years with Aspiazu, including spells in New York, where he captivated the public with Simon's *Peanut Vendor*. While working with Aspiazu, he organized a Quartet, with himself as lead voice and maracas player, Daniel Sánchez as second voice and guitar. The quartet was completed with another guitar (then a tres, a three double-stringed instrument similar to the guitar) and a trumpet. In less than four years Machín recorded about one hundred fifty numbers for RCA Victor, mostly with his Quartet, and sometimes with his Sextet or other Orchestras. Probably not even Bing Crosby, already well known by then, made so many records in those years.

In 1935 he left for Europe, spent a few years singing mostly in France, and by 1939 took refuge from the Second World War in Spain, whose Civil War had left the country impoverished, bereft of resources and hungry. Those were arduous times for the artist. Machín persevered, and little by little he made headway into Spanish hearts. As years passed by, Spain emerged from its dire straits and began an era of prosperity and so did Machín. Machín sang and played for three generations of Spaniards until his death in 1977.

As the Benny Goodman trio and then quartet was able to grasp the essence of Jazz with such small instrumentation, so did Machín for the "son cubano" with his group. Usually the son will start with a brief introduction by the string instrument, followed by Machín singing alone or dueting with Daniel, the first part in a slower pace than the second part or "montuno", always faster, with Machín usually singing duet with Daniel or using the standard call-and-response form of African origin of a soloist answered by the chorus, which usually was Daniel, another musician from the group and sometimes an additional voice, not credited on the record.

As for repertoire, Machín had the cream of Cuban troubadours and "son" composers: specially Ignacio Piñeiro and Rosendo Ruiz.

The first recordings made by the Quartet were *Adela*, *Suavecito* and *A Baracoa me voy*, on 14th July, 1930.

First part of *Adela* is a delicate description of Adela's beautiful figure and eyes; the "montuno", in a contrast very common in "sones", is a humorous recount of Adela dancing, with some comic episodes included: a homemade remedy for a burst toe: three tomatoes, avocado paste and candle wax!

Suavecito (*Slowly*) is a Piñeiro classic. It was introduced by Piñeiro's Sextet at the International Fair in Seville in 1929. The group won a gold medal with the song. *Suavecito* is a panegyric of the "son":

El son es lo más sublime
para el alma divertir
Se debería de morir
quien por bueno no lo estime

A brief mention to Seville is not forgotten:

Una linda sevillana
le decía a su marido:
me vuelvo loca, chiquito,
por la música cubana

The "son" is the most sublime
(music) to amuse the soul
Those who don't appreciate it
should die

A beautiful girl from Seville
said to her husband:
Cuban music, baby,
drives me crazy

Machín usually plays the claves in the first part and the maracas in the second but in *A Baracoa me voy* (*I'm going to Baracoa*) both are heard at the same time. Either the trumpeter was playing them or there was an extra

unidentified musician. As it was common at those times (also with swing bands) Machín introduces the rest of the group: "Yayito" Maldonado, from Puerto Rico, first guitar, Daniel Sánchez, second guitar and voice, and of course, Machín itself. He omitted the trumpet player, Remberto Lara. The trumpet was always played muted, in order to achieve a better balance with the rest of the instruments in an era devoid of microphones.

Next five songs were recorded in the autumn of 1930. Second voices were very important in Latin American music and timeless arguments can be held about what a second voice should be like. Should it blend with the other, as to form a new voice? Should it always be a little bit after the first voice? That's not the case with Daniel. Sometimes he blends, sometimes he follows Machín and others made a bridge between two words and actually gets ahead of the first voice. It is an exciting counterpoint what he did, with his rich baritone voice.

In *Pobre corazón* (*Poor heart*) there is a bongo drum added to the quartet, and apparently a tres substituted the guitar.

Dámelo (*Give it to me*) asked for a kiss, first in lyric verses and then in the "montuno" in a more prosaic manner, even threatening with suicide . . .

Se va el dulcerito (*The candy vendor passes by*) is a "pregón" or street cry written in the wave of the success of *El Manisero* (*The Peanut Vendor*). Machín sings the whole theme with some good backing by the guitar.

Quisiera morirme (*I wish I die*) as in others, is an urgent love call . . .

La rosa oriental (*The rose from Oriente*). In this case, a "rose" (a beautiful woman) from Oriente, the Eastern part of Cuba, asks for a "son sabroso de Oriente" (a tasty "son" from Oriente) in order to leave her land.

Next five songs were recorded in 1931. Instead of a first guitar, Alejandro Rodríguez – "Mulatón" – ("The big Mulatto") was playing the tres. Machín needed a new trumpet player. A very good reed player was around: Mario Bauzá. Machín convinced him to learn to play the trumpet, and being the extraordinary musician Bauzá is, he learned to play it in four weeks, starting a career that would take him to become musical director of Chick Webb's Orchestra and afterwards, Machito's. With these two musicians there was more relationship and a new sound in the Quartet. The tres, with a bigger and more incisive sound than the guitar, could engage in duets with the trumpet.

Oprobio (*Infamy*) is an insulting farewell to an ex-lover, followed by a humorous "montuno".

On the other hand, *El Huerfanito* (*The Orphan*) is a sad story of an orphan, who of course, is looking for a woman to love him. There is an additional voice in the chorus in this and other songs.

At the end of last century there was an important Chinese immigration in Cuba, and, as it happened in San Francisco, they left a significant influence in the music. In *Ilusión China* (*Chinese Hope*) Machín imitates the way the Chinese speak Spanish, while Bauzá and Mulatón play Chinese-like melodies for ambiance.

Ojeras (*Rings under your eyes*) tries to go behind the woman's "ojeras" to inquire what they mean or hide . . .

Las flores de mi jardín (*The flowers of my garden*) is a typical troubadour song, mentioning some flowers and predictably the treason of a certain rose . . .

From number 14 on were recorded in 1932. Two Puerto Ricans took the places of Mulatón and Bauzá; respectively, Cándido Vincenty and Plácido Acevedo, who continued developing and enriching the quartet format. After Machín left for Europe, the quartet tradition was not followed by Cuban musicians, but Puerto Ricans made it an important element of their music. Plácido Acevedo founded The Mayarí Quartet and Marciano, Flores and others followed with their own.

Buey Viejo (*Old Ox*) is another gem from Piñeiro, a humanitarian song asking for mercy and compassion for the old ox:

Carretero no maltrates
a este pobre buey tan viejo
que ya dobla la cabeza
por el peso de los tarros

Cartwright, do not abuse
that poor old ox, so old
that is bending his head
for the weight of his horns

Sigue tu senda (Follow your steps) is another gallant reproach song to a provocative woman . . . *Triguñita (Brunette)* is a more elaborate song, started by Daniel alone, then joined by Machín. There is some good guitar and trumpet accompaniment.

The protest or political song has a very old tradition in Latin music. *Lamento Cubano (Cuban lament)* caused his author, Eliseo Grenet to be ousted from Cuba by dictator Machado. The song is as actual now as it was sixty years ago:

Oh! Cuba hermosa,
primorosa, ¿por qué
sufres hoy tanto quebranto?
Oh! Patria mía
¡Quién diría
que tu cielo azul
nublara el llanto . . . !
Ah! En el susurro del palmar
se siente el echo resonar
de una voz de dolor
que al amor llama . . .
Oh! Cuba hermosa,
primorosa, ¿por qué
sufres hoy tanto quebranto?

Oh! Beautiful Cuba
Gorgeous (Cuba) Why
are you suffering so much today?
Oh! My country
Who would have said
that your blue sky
would be blurred by tears . . . !
Ah! Among the palm grove murmur
you can hear the echo resound
of a voice in pain
calling for love . . .
Oh! beautiful Cuba
Gorgeous (Cuba) Why
are you suffering so much today?

Esperanzas muertas (Dead hopes) composed by Machín, is a philosophical reflection on life, a beautiful Bolero-Son. *Junto a un cañaveral (By a sugar cane field)* is another protest song, also pertaining to the present times. It is not a son but a guajira, in 6/8 time in its first part. In the chorus, as in many other recordings of 1932, you can notice the voice of Davilita, a great Puertorican singer at his beginnings by that time. The lyrics of this guajira start like this:

Junto a un cañaveral
una guajirita un día
sollozando me decía:
Ver quisiera mi Cuba feliz,
los cubanos unidos estar,
y por siempre la vida vivir,
vivir la vida . . .

By a sugar cane field
a young Cuban peasant girl,
said to me one day, sobbing:
I would like to see my Cuba happy
all Cubans joined together
and live life forever,
enjoy life . . .

In *Muñequita (Little Doll)* Davilita is again present in the chorus.

Indeed, it's amazing how only four men can sound so vivid, so actual after sixty years. Cuba is right before our eyes through our ears, when Machín and his Quartet play.

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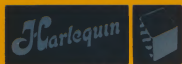
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2. **SUAVECITO (PIÑEIRO)**
3. **A BARACOA ME VOY (MACHIN)**
4. **POBRE CORAZON (RUIZ)**
5. **DAMELO (PIÑEIRO)**
6. **SE VA EL DULCERITO (RUIZ)**
7. **QUISIERA MORIRME (RUIZ)**
8. **LA ROSA ORIENTAL (ESPIGUL)**
9. **OPROBIO (HERNANDEZ)**
10. **EL HUERFANITO (GUTIÉRREZ)**
11. **ILUSION CHINA (BRITO)**
12. **OJERAS (GUTIERREZ)**
13. **LAS FLORES DE MI JARDIN (FABELO)**
14. **BUEY VIEJO (PIÑEIRO)**
15. **SIGUE TU SENDA (GOMEZ)**
16. **TRIGUENITA (BRITO)**
17. **LAMENTO CUBANO (GRENET)**
18. **ESPERANZAS MUERTAS (MACHIN)**
19. **JUNTO A UN CAÑAVERAL (RUIZ)**
20. **MUÑEQUITA (RODRIGUEZ)**

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CUARTETO MACHIN



HQ CD 24



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VOLUME I 1930-1932

